

**Amendments to the Claims:** This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An absorbent core for use in an absorbent article, the core comprising a plurality of substantially continuous and coextensive filaments in the form of an expanded tow, at least some of the filaments having disposed on a surface thereof a layer comprising a superabsorbent material formed in place on the surface from a liquid superabsorbent polymer;

wherein the core comprises two or more adjacent and coextensive strata, wherein one stratum comprises filaments having disposed on said surface thereof said layer comprising the superabsorbent material, and at least one additional stratum comprises filaments substantially free of superabsorbent material.

2. (Original) The absorbent core of claim 1, wherein the filaments are selected from the group consisting of RAYON, cellulose acetate, polypropylene, polyethylene, polyethylene terephthalate, and sheath-core bi-component filaments, and combinations thereof.

3. (Original) The absorbent core of claim 1, wherein at least some of the filaments comprise cellulose acetate.

4. (Original) The absorbent core of claim 1, wherein the surface of at least some of the filaments is hydrophilized.

5. (Previously Presented) The absorbent core of claim 1, wherein substantially all of the filaments of said one stratum have disposed on said surface thereof said layer comprising the superabsorbent material.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously Presented) The absorbent core of claim 1, wherein the at least one additional stratum comprises a surfactant disposed on the surface of at least some of the filaments.

8. (Currently Amended) An absorbent core for use in an absorbent article, the core comprising a plurality of substantially continuous and coextensive filaments in the form of an expanded tow, at least some of the filaments having disposed on a surface thereof a layer comprising a superabsorbent material formed in place on the surface from a liquid superabsorbent polymer;

wherein the core comprises two or more adjacent and coextensive strata, wherein one stratum comprises filaments having disposed on said surface thereof said layer comprising the superabsorbent material, and at least one additional stratum iscomprises filaments substantially free of superabsorbent material;

wherein the liquid superabsorbent polymer is selected from the group consisting of one or more superabsorbent polymers at least partially dissolved in a liquid carrier, a solution in a liquid carrier of one or more superabsorbent precursors, and a combination of one or more superabsorbent polymers and superabsorbent precursors.

9. (Original) The absorbent core of claim 1, wherein the core has two opposing sides and the superabsorbent material is disposed in a pattern on one or both of the opposing sides.

10. (Original) The absorbent core of claim 1 further comprising pulp fibers interspersed between at least some of the filaments.

11. (Original) The absorbent core of claim 1 further comprising superabsorbent polymer particles interspersed among at least some of the filaments.

12. (Withdrawn) A method of making an absorbent core for use in an absorbent article, the method comprising:

a) expanding a tow comprising a plurality of substantially continuous and coextensive filaments, each filament having a surface; and

b) forming, from a liquid superabsorbent polymer, a layer comprising a superabsorbent material on the surface of at least some of the filaments.

13. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12 wherein the forming step comprises: applying to the expanded tow the liquid superabsorbent polymer to form a treated, expanded tow comprising a liquid superabsorbent polymer coating; and curing the treated expanded tow to form the layer comprising the

superabsorbent material.

14. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 13 wherein the applying step comprises:  
immersing the expanded tow in a bath comprising the liquid superabsorbent polymer;  
removing the expanded tow from the bath; and  
removing a portion of the liquid superabsorbent polymer coating.
15. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 13 wherein the applying step comprises spraying the 2  
liquid superabsorbent polymer on at least one surface of the expanded tow.
16. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 13 wherein the curing step comprises exposing the  
treated expanded tow to heat.
17. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 13 wherein the curing step comprises exposing the  
treated expanded tow to radiation.
18. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12 wherein the core has two opposing sides, and  
wherein the forming step comprises patternwise spraying the liquid superabsorbent polymer on  
one or both of the sides.
19. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12 wherein the core has two opposing sides, and  
wherein the forming step comprises spraying the liquid superabsorbent polymer on one of the  
sides, the method further comprising applying a surfactant to at least some of the filaments on  
the other side.
20. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12 further comprising partially separating the  
filaments to form the expanded tow.
21. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 20 wherein the step of partially separating comprises  
blowing the tow with jets of air.
22. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12 further comprising at least partially flattening the  
tow.

23. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12 further comprising interspersing pulp fibres between at least some of the filaments.
24. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12 further comprising interspersing superabsorbent polymer particles between at least some of the filaments.
25. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12 further comprising hydrophilizing at least some of the filaments.
26. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12 wherein the forming step comprises forming a layer on substantially all of the filaments.
27. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12 further comprising, after the forming step, removing one or both of water and residual volatile reactants from the formed layer.
28. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12 further comprising, after the forming step, tenderizing the filaments having thereon said layer comprising the superabsorbent material.
29. (Withdrawn) A system for making an absorbent core for use in an absorbent article, the system comprising:
- a) means for applying a liquid superabsorbent polymer to a tow comprising a plurality of substantially continuous and coextensive filaments, thereby forming a treated expanded tow comprising a liquid superabsorbent polymer coating on the surface of at least some of the filaments; and
  - b) means for forming, from the liquid superabsorbent polymer coating, a layer comprising a superabsorbent material on said surface of said at least some of the filaments.
30. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29, wherein the means for applying comprises a bath.
31. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29, wherein the means for applying comprises a spray nozzle.

32. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29, wherein the core comprises two opposing sides, and wherein the means for applying comprises a spray nozzle configured to apply the liquid superabsorbent polymer on one or both of the sides in a pattern.
33. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29, wherein the core comprises two opposing sides, the system further comprising means for applying a surfactant to the expanded tow.
34. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29, wherein the means for forming comprises a heater.
35. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29, wherein the means for forming comprises a radiation source.
36. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29 further comprising means for removing a portion of the liquid superabsorbent polymer coating.
37. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29 further comprising means for interspersing pulp fibres between at least some of the filaments.
38. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29" further comprising means for interspersing superabsorbent polymer particles between at least some of the filaments.
39. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29 further comprising means for flattening the tow.
40. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29 further comprising means for partially separating filaments of the tow, thereby forming the expanded tow.
41. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 40 wherein the means for partially separating comprises a source of air positioned to direct jets of air toward the tow.
42. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29 further comprising means for removing one or both of water and residual volatile reactants from the formed layer.
43. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29 further comprising means for tenderizing the filaments having thereon a layer comprising a superabsorbent material.

44. (Previously Presented) The absorbent core of claim 8 wherein the core has two opposing sides and the superabsorbent material is disposed in a pattern on one or both of the opposing sides.

45. (Previously Presented) The absorbent core of claim 8 further comprising pulp fibers interspersed between at least some of the filaments.

46. (Previously Presented) The absorbent core of claim 8 further comprising superabsorbent polymer particles interspersed among at least some of the filaments.